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*The Battles of Trenton and Princeton.* By WILLIAM S. STRYKER, Adjutant-General of New Jersey. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1898. Pp. xv, 514.)

DESCENDED from an officer of the Revolutionary Army, born in Trenton, educated at Princeton, an officer in the Union army in the Civil War, adjutant-general of the state of New Jersey, and a diligent student of the history of the country, especially during the Revolutionary period, there is no one so well qualified to write the history of the battles of Trenton and Princeton as the author of this exhaustive work. It must be the storehouse from which future historians must derive their information as to this crisis in the struggle of the nation for life and liberty. To review it must be simply to condense the story.

Part II. of the work presents the materials upon which the author has founded his accurate and interesting history. From Europe and America, from public and private sources he has gathered the rich stores for his work. If any fault is to be found it is in the minuteness of the details, especially in the account of the first battle at Trenton, interfering with the historical perspective and weakening the effect of the salient features of the events described.

The closing months of 1776 were the darkest period of the struggle for independence. The American army had been overwhelmed and driven from New York. Washington slowly and doggedly retreated through the Jerseys, abandoning each place only as the British vanguard entered, until at 11 A. M. on Sunday, Dec. 8, just after the American troops had crossed the Delaware, the British and Hessian troops entered Trenton. Washington had taken the precaution to destroy or to remove to the other side of the river every boat on the Delaware for a distance of seventy miles. This act and Howe's love of ease and consequent delay saved Philadelphia and the cause of freedom.

"These were the times that tried men's souls," but Washington never yielded to despondency. He made every effort to strengthen his forces. The terms of enlistment of many of the troops had expired and they had returned home; some had thrown down their arms believing that the cause was lost; many of the colonists had listened to Howe's proclamation and accepted British protection. Cornwallis had returned to New York and was about to sail for England, to announce that the rebellion was subdued. Washington by his earnest appeal induced his veterans to volunteer for six weeks after the expiration of their term of service on December 31; through Robert Morris he secured ten dollars in "hard money" for each man, and added several thousand troops from Pennsylvania to his exhausted army. He planned and executed the attack upon the Hessians in Trenton. Crossing the Delaware on Christmas night amid floating ice, marching amid wind and snow and hail, at eight o'clock the next morning he surprised and defeated the enemy. Only two of his officers and two soldiers were wounded, and one or two perished in the snow; but two days afterward a thousand of these thinly-

clad, shoeless, poorly-fed men were unfit for duty. Col. Rall, the Hessian commander, was mortally wounded ; his loss was 22 killed, 84 wounded and 916 captured. General Stryker's account of this battle, as we have said, is the most accurate and complete that has ever been written.

The moral effect of this victory upon the Americans and the British cannot be overestimated. By it the people were inspired with greater courage and patriotism. Washington gave his troops two days' rest in Pennsylvania ; then crossing the Delaware for the third time in a week he was again in Trenton.

The victory at Trenton was a terrible surprise to the British at New York. Howe sent Cornwallis with 7000 or 8000 well-disciplined troops toward Trenton. Delayed by muddy roads they did not reach Princeton until January 1, 1777. Washington's troops encountered them at Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, and delayed them as much as possible so that they did not reach Trenton until nearly sunset. Washington had withdrawn nearly all his troops across the Assanpink and obstinately defended the little bridge in the town. On the last hour of daylight hung the fate of the nation. His officers urged Cornwallis to continue the battle and cross the little creek, but he said his troops were wearied and that he "had the old fox just where he wanted him and would catch him in the morning." But when morning came the game was gone.

Historians generally have not attached sufficient importance to this second battle of Trenton. Washington was now in a most critical position. A superior force was in his front, the Delaware was in his rear ; most of his troops had never been under fire and the muddy roads were almost impassable. At a council of war held at night Washington proposed to march by a new and circuitous route around the British army to Princeton, attack the forces there and if possible secure the stores at New Brunswick. The plan was accepted, but could it be executed ? A kind Providence again interfered ; while the council was in session a cold northwest wind sprang up and in two hours the ground was frozen hard. Shortly after midnight the army marched silently away, while small parties kept throwing up entrenchments and the blazing watch-fires completely deceived the enemy. The army reached the Quaker meeting-house a mile and a half from Princeton about sunrise. Three British regiments, the 17th, the 55th, and the 40th, with three troops of dragoons, had passed the night at Princeton, and the greater portion under Col. Mawhood had just started to join Gen. Leslie at Maidenhead.

None of the historians seems to have noticed Washington's admirable arrangement of his army. The writer of this review was the first to call attention to it. The van and the rear were composed of veterans ; the Pennsylvania militia, who had not been under fire save at Trenton, were in the centre. The army was also arranged geographically : the New England troops were in the van, those from Delaware, Maryland and Virginia brought up the rear and Mercer's command, intended for special service, was also composed of veterans. The Philadelphia Troop of 22 men was all the cavalry ; the artillery was carefully distributed.

The British 17th and part of the 55th had crossed the bridge over Stony Brook at Worth's (now Bruere's) Mill when, looking back from Millett's hill, they saw the morning sunlight flashing on the arms of the Americans advancing toward Princeton. Mawhood recrossed the bridge and discovered Mercer marching to destroy it. Each was surprised and endeavored to gain the high ground near William Clark's house which stood a little east of the present turnpike and near Mr. Lombard's house. The Americans reached it first and from behind a worm fence poured forth a deadly fire which was returned partly from behind some farm buildings. A bayonet charge drove the Americans down the hill. Mercer's horse was wounded, he dismounted and refusing to surrender was bayoneted and left for dead. The Pennsylvania troops now took part but were driven back, although Mawhood could not silence Moulder's battery. Washington now appeared upon the scene, galloped between the lines and with waving hat and commanding voice cheered them on to fight. Reining in his horse and facing the enemy he sat motionless. Between the lines and exposed to the fire of both armies it seemed impossible for him to escape death. A roar of musketry follows; Hitchcock's Rhode Island Regiment on the right, the 7th Virginia and other Continentals on the left swing into line, the enemy breaks and flies as the shout of victory arises from the American army. Again was Washington saved by the special Providence of God. The head of the column defeated the remainder of the 55th at a little ravine near the town. A part of the 40th escaped; nearly two hundred who were lodged in Nassau Hall, the principal college building, were made prisoners. The walls still bear the evidence of the battle.

Again had Cornwallis been outgeneralled by Washington. He hastened to Princeton only to find that the "old fox" had escaped, but that stores and money-chest were safe in New Brunswick. The British loss was 100 killed and nearly 300 wounded and prisoners. The American army lost about 40 killed and wounded, a large portion being officers. Gen. Mercer and Lieut. Read were mortally wounded; Col. Haslet, Capts. Fleming, Neil and Shippen, Lieut. Yates and Ensign Morris fell upon the field.

These ten days in New Jersey, these battles produced a wonderful effect, gave new courage to the people, strengthened the army, dissipated the British dream of speedy conquest, secured the alliance with France, silenced the enemies of Washington and proved to the world that here was a great military genius, and a statesman also, for Congress had made him dictator of the nation struggling for liberty. "Washington, the dictator," has shown himself both a Fabius and a Camillus. "His march through our lines is allowed to be a prodigy of generalship," wrote Horace Walpole. "All our hopes were blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton," said Lord George Germain in Parliament.

Well might Frederick the Great say of this campaign, "The achievements of Washington and his little band of compatriots between the 25th of December and the 4th of January, a space of ten days, were the most brilliant of any recorded in the annals of military achievements."

In this work General Stryker has given us an admirable and well-illustrated history of the crisis of the nation's struggle for liberty and independence.

HENRY CLAY CAMERON.

*A Constitutional History of the American People, 1776-1850.* By FRANCIS NEWTON THORPE. (New York : Harper and Brothers. 1898. Two vols., pp. xxvii, 486 ; xv, 520.)

IN the preface to these stout octavos Mr. Thorpe tells us that his work "is a record of the evolution of government in this country since the Revolution." Among the struggles through which this evolution has been accomplished he names as of first importance those which sought a wider suffrage, fairer representation, the gifts of freedom and the franchise to the colored man, free schools, "the separation of the state from questionable practices and the establishment of government directly upon the will of the people." This enumeration discloses at the outset the writer's view of his theme ; it is, to quote his own words, "a history of the evolution of democracy in America ; and by the term democracy is to be understood the form of government, not the doctrine of a political party." The merits—which are great—and the defects—some of which are striking—of the work, are in good part the natural results of this view. A broadly conceived constitutional history of the American people must take into consideration every factor which, acting on and through government, has shaped public policy and built up political character ; and such a history must give to each factor the weight which measures with proximate accuracy its influence in determining these results. It is obvious that Mr. Thorpe has not conceived his task in this way. But to identify as he has done, the constitutional history of the American people during the three-quarters of a century immediately following the Declaration of Independence, with the evolution of democracy, is either to slight, or wholly to ignore matters which belong to the very heart of the subject. Upon every people capable of contributing to general progress two distinct tasks are laid : one, to conserve and improve the civilization acquired either by inheritance or through intercourse with other peoples ; the other, to diffuse as widely as possible, both at home and abroad, this civilization—a word which stands for all those good things the possession of which separates the most advanced of human kind from those in the lowest stage of savagery. It is in the fulfillment of the second task that a people becomes democratic. In no country, unless we except certain dependencies of Great Britain, has the diffusion of the best things—the things which make life noble and enjoyable, which enlarge the powers and raise the character of man both as an individual and as a member of society—gone further or faster than in the United States. In its political aspect this diffusion takes the form of a right to participate in government and thereby the acquisition and use of the power to shape public policy in the interest of the less advanced,